UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25901
8 June 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 8 JUNE 1993 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The purpose of this letter is to report to you about developments relating to implementation of the provisions of the Peace Accords for El Salvador as they pertain to the end of the military structure of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and the destruction of its remaining weapons and equipment.

As the members of the Security Council were informed during informal consultations on 1 June 1993, an explosion at an automobile repair shop in Managua, Nicaragua, on 23 May led to the discovery of a weapons cache containing, among other things, a number of surface-to-air missiles, large quantities of ammunition and military weapons, as well as plastic and other explosives. A number of documents were also found, including over 300 passports of various nationalities. On the strength of the evidence found at the shop, the Nicaraguan authorities linked the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL), one of the constituent groups of the FMLN, to the presence of these illegal weapons on Nicaraguan territory. Although the leadership of the group at first denied any connection to the incident, it quickly acknowledged its responsibility for the existence of the cache, which it explained as an unfortunate by-product of the years of conflict. At the same time however, it steadfastly denied any intention of reverting to the use of arms as an instrument of political pressure. It also offered its full cooperation in clarifying the facts.

At the invitation of the Nicaraguan Government, my Special Representative in El Salvador, accompanied by several members of ONUSAL, travelled to Managua on 29 May to cooperate in the investigation launched by the Nicaraguan authorities. Although Mr. Ramírez-Ocampo has now returned to El Salvador, the ONUSAL team has remained in Nicaragua to assist in the disposal of the arms and in the investigation of the facts surrounding their discovery. Evidence collected so far, together with the explicit acknowledgement by the leadership of the responsible FMLN group, has confirmed that the arms were the property of that group and that some of its members were involved in their maintenance. Enquiries continue with a view to assigning responsibilities more precisely. These enquiries will also examine the possible involvement of organizations or persons foreign to El Salvador. Leaders of the same FMLN group have provided information about the existence in Nicaragua of other clandestine deposits containing considerable amounts of weapons. Specialists from ONUSAL are working with a Nicaraguan team to itemize the war matériel found in those deposits and dispose of it.

Regardless of the results of the ongoing investigation, I must emphasize that the maintenance of clandestine arms deposits, for whatever reason, is a cause of serious concern and that the non-inclusion of these arms in the final inventory presented by the FMLN to ONUSAL raises serious questions of confidence and trust. It should be clear to those responsible that the peace process itself could be placed in jeopardy if such damaging incidents should again occur. In this regard I note with satisfaction that the FMLN is cooperating with ONUSAL to locate and eliminate possible remaining arms caches in El Salvador. It is also worth noting that, at ONUSAL's request, the FMLN agreed to the destruction, carried out on 4 June, of the sophisticated weapons located in El Salvador, which are referred to in paragraph 15 of my last report to the Security Council (S/25812 and Add.1-3). As will be recalled, the destruction of these weapons had been scheduled to coincide with full compliance by the Government with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission, due at the end of June. It is hoped that these events will bring to a close the process of the destruction of all FMLN weapons, thus eliminating a source of distrust that has been affecting the peace process.

The swift resolution of this episode should serve to encourage the Government to accelerate the collection of the large number of assault weapons still in private hands in El Salvador. This would imbue a greater sense of confidence in the Salvadorian population and thus strengthen the process of national reconciliation, which is the overriding goal of the Peace Accords.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI